

MINUTES

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TASK FORCE

Tuesday October 7, 2008

2:00 PM

Council Chambers

Municipal Building

93 Cottage Street

Bar Harbor, Maine

I. Call to Order at 2:03 PM

Members present: Chair Patricia Samuel, Karen Baksa, Barry Teater, Chris Vincenty, Howdy Houghton

Also present was Planning Director Anne Krieg

II. Excused Absences - none

III. Minutes for July 22 and August 19th 2008 were approved with no editions.

IV. Staff Reports

A. Coordination with Cruise Ship Study Task Force

There was a discussion about the downtown retail environment. The attention to land based vs. cruise ship customers on the part of retailers. There was concern that there may be preferential treatment by stores to cruise ship passengers. Task Force members thought this was sending bad message. It was questioned if the task force could provide a forum for discussion, perhaps through the Chamber.

B. Economic Development Plan – no update

C. Signage project – no update

V. Regular Business

A. Discussion of new developments in downtown

The Task Force discussed the possible development of a parking garage at length.

A motion was made by Vincenty and seconded by Teater to send to the Town Council for their consideration the following points for discussion in relation to Ocean Properties' development plans on West and Rodick Streets and on the possible parking garage in the Backyard Parking lot:

- 1. Town should retain control of land of the parking lot;*
- 2. The parking garage should be an income generator to Town and the Town should be the manager of the property;*
- 3. There should be all day parking in the garage with payment by the hour;*
- 4. The garage should be pleasing in appearance;*

5. *Delivery area space for businesses on Main Street and Cottage Street needs to be retained or addressed as part of the development plan.*
6. *There needs to be safe pedestrian access to the street.*
7. *The number of parking spaces proposed in the garage must be in excess of what is there now for the public. This should be a significant enough of a net increase to justify the costs.*
8. *The Town should position itself to pay the bond off before life expectancy of building*

All were in favor of the motion.

B. Downtown Business I and II and Shoreland General Development districting

The task force discussed issues in the downtown district including:

- Conflicts with residents living in a core commercial area with seasonal nighttime activity
- History of development in the downtown area – e.g. stores on Ledge lawn Avenue.
- Delivery truck activity in close proximity to residences and hotels
- Nighttime activity of seasonal employees
- Lower Main Street development encroaching on residential areas
- Businesses allowed on side streets off of main and Cottage Streets – limit to certain kinds?
- Desire to encourage re-development but not in combining lots to create larger developments – desire to keep the pedestrian scale.
- Maintain the walking population including schoolchildren walking to school.
- Grandfathering issues – if zoning changes, allow businesses to keep what they have, encourage maintenance and improvements.
- Bed and Breakfasts were discussed to encourage their reuse of historic homes
- How much business should be allowed on School Streets?

Ultimately the task force offered the following criteria to staff to work with to begin creating a map for task force discussion:

- Encourage year round residential near and part of businesses
- District boundaries should follow lot lines
- Current use analysis as basis for decision making
- Generous grandfathering for existing so they will not falter and be allowed to make improvements
- Avoid uses in conflict with directly adjacent residential uses

- Neighborhood conflict with on-street parking issues
- Possible limitations on size of buildings, control size of buildings
- Incentives for owner-occupied buildings or provide year round housing on upper floors
- 0 side line and front setback should be revisited to determine effectiveness
- Hospital should be asked to come in as they are an important anchor

VI. Public Comment - none

VII. Matters for Next Meeting

Maine Preservation and Maine State Housing and the new building codes for historic buildings as well as a discussion of the Main Street Maine program were discussed as future discussion topics. Koffman offered to get a speaker for these in the future.

Houghton informed the task force that the price of lobster has fallen to a boat price of \$2.60/lb. This is a Maine commodity market and many Canada processors have shut down. There are ripple effects to the economy from this industry. The lobstermen feel the difficulties of the cost of fuel as well as increased living expenses. Bar Harbor lobstermen typically have the maximum catch in October/November. It's important to let people know that the industry is suffering and for people to buy lobster. There is no local processing facility.

VIII. Confirm Date/Time/Location for Next Meeting

October 21, 2008 at 2 PM

IX. Adjournment at 3:40 PM

These minutes were prepared by Planning Director Anne Krieg for Task Force consideration at their November 25, 2008 meeting.